

Document made available under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

International application number: PCT/GB05/000213

International filing date: 21 January 2005 (21.01.2005)

Document type: Certified copy of priority document

Document details: Country/Office: GB
Number: 0401771.1
Filing date: 28 January 2004 (28.01.2004)

Date of receipt at the International Bureau: 17 February 2005 (17.02.2005)

Remark: Priority document submitted or transmitted to the International Bureau in compliance with Rule 17.1(a) or (b)



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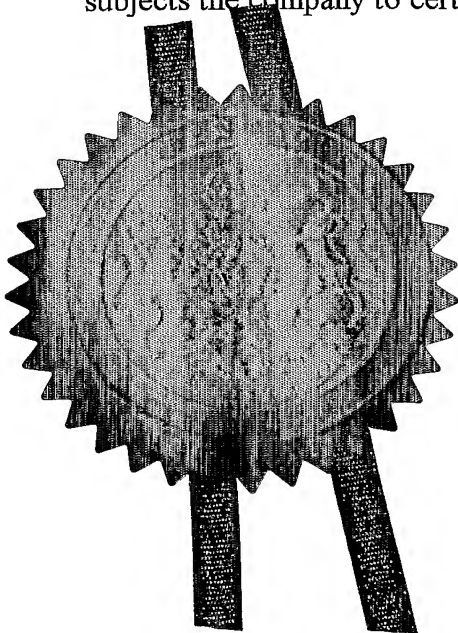
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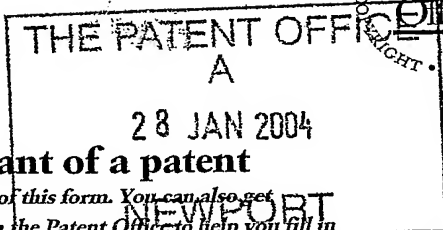
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2. Patent application number

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0401771.1

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames)

James George
Rye Court, Berrow
Nr Malvern, Worcestershire
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08562241001

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

4. Title of the invention

Flow Control Device

5. Name of your agent (if you have one)

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Number of earlier UK application

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Patents Form 1/77

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Continuation sheets of this form

Description

Claim(s)

Abstract

Drawing(s)

6

3

1

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Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (Patents Form 7/77)

Request for a preliminary examination and search (Patents Form 9/77)

1

Request for a substantive examination (Patents Form 10/77)

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Date 26/01/2004

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Mr M R Higgins
01242 524520

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FLOW CONTROL DEVICE

This invention relates to a flow control device for dispensing liquid to a predetermined level in a container.

5

When filling a container, such as a bucket or watering can, it is common practice to walk away from the container while it is being filled and then to return only to find that the container has overflowed.

10

The present invention seeks to provide a flow control device that will prevent this happening.

According to the invention there is provided a flow control device for dispensing liquid to a predetermined level in a container, comprising a tubular body
15 having a closed upper end and an open lower end, an inlet attached to or for attachment to a liquid supply, a flap valve which is pivoted within the body below the inlet about an axis extending transversely to the body and which, in the absence of external forces, will adopt an open condition allowing liquid to flow through the body, and a float for pivoting the flap valve towards a closed condition as the liquid
20 level in the container rises.

Preferred and/or optional features of the invention are set forth in claims 2 to 15, inclusive.

The invention will now be more particularly described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawing which is a sectional side view of one embodiment of a flow control device according to the invention.

5 Referring to the drawing, the flow control device shown therein can be fitted internally in a container (not shown), such as a bucket or watering can, to dispense liquid to a predetermined level in the container.

The fluid control device comprises a tubular body 10 having a closed upper
10 end 11 and an open lower end 12. The body 10 also has a hook 13 for hooking the device to the rim of the container.

The tubular body 10 has a liquid inlet 14 connected to, and extending through,
its closed upper end 11. The outer upper end of the inlet 14 has a plurality of annular
15 serrations or other formations 15 by which a liquid feed pipe, such as hose, can be fitted.

The tubular body 10 also has a side discharge opening 16. An inclined wall 17
separates the discharge opening 16 from a float chamber 18.

20

A flap valve 19 is pivoted within the tubular body 10 intermediate the upper
and lower ends 11 and 12, respectively, and above discharge opening 16. The axis 20
of the flap valve 19 is preferably, but not necessarily, offset to one side of a plane 21
bisecting the flap valve 19. A float 22 is provided in the float chamber 18 below the

flap valve 19 for pivoting the flap valve towards a closed condition as the liquid level in the container rises. The inclined wall 17 acts as a stop to prevent the flap valve 19 opening too far.

5 The float 22, as shown, is a two-part float and is exposed to liquid in the container via the open lower end 12 of the body 10.

10 The flap valve 19 is weighted so as to move towards an open condition as shown in the single Figure in the absence of external forces applied to the flap valve by the float or water pressure above the flap valve.

An annular seal 23 of generally L-shaped cross-section is provided on the flap valve 19 to seal against the internal wall of the body 10 under liquid pressure when the flap valve is in a closed condition.

15

The lower, inner end of the inlet 14 is shaped to direct liquid fed into the container past the side of the flap valve 19 remote from the flow chamber when the latter is in a fully open condition and to direct the liquid against said one side of the flap valve 19 as the latter starts to close.

20

A guide 24, typically defining an inverted U-shaped channel, is provided on the internal wall of the body 10 to encourage water dispensed from the inlet to flow past said one side of the flap valve 19 and through the side discharge opening 16 when the flap valve is in an open condition.

If the axis 20 of the flap valve 19 is offset as described above, the axis 20 divides the flap valve 19 into a first portion 19a and a second portion 19b of greater surface area than the portion 19a and the float 22 acts on the under surface of the smaller portion 19b for a reason which will be explained later.

5

Regions of the body 10 just below the first portion 19a of the flap valve when the flap valve is considered in a closed condition and just above the portion 19b of the flap valve when the flap valve is considered in a closed condition are outwardly contoured as shown in the single drawing to assist with the accurate operation and closing of the flap valve 19 as it is important that the tolerances between the seal 23 and the body 10 are as close as possible to aid effective sealing with minimal liquid pressure. The body is, therefore, outwardly contoured in regions past which the flap valve passes as it approaches its closed condition.

15 Also, the flap valve 19 ideally has a round pivot rod mounted in apertures in the body 10 which apertures are oval or elongate in a plane normal to the axis of the body to facilitate opening and closing of the flap valve.

The flap valve 19 has a manual externally operable member for pivoting the flap valve 19 between closed and open conditions. As shown, this takes the form of a spring loaded plunger 25. The flow control device is also provided with a pressure release valve located above the flap valve 19 when the latter is in a closed condition. This pressure release valve could be incorporated in the spring loaded plunger 25.

The spring loaded plunger 25 also acts as a stop to ensure the flap valve 19 closes in the correct position.

The flow control device can be made of any suitable material and the tubular
5 body 10 typically has a cross sectional dimension of approximately 4 cm, although it could be smaller or larger.

The body 10 can have any appropriate cross-sectional shape. It does not need to be of circular cross-section.

10

In use, the device is placed into the container and hooked on the rim of the container. Water or other liquid is fed into the tubular body 10 via a hose attached to the inlet 14. When the liquid in the container is below the float 22, the flap valve 19 pivots to an open condition as shown in the single Figure. As the liquid level in the
15 container rises and makes contact with the float 22, the flap valve pivots towards a closed condition. As the flap valve 19 pivots towards its closed condition, liquid entering the container from the spigot will impinge on the one side of the flap valve 19 causing the flap valve to close rapidly and seal against the internal wall of the body. If the pivot axis is offset from the plane 21 the pressure of liquid above the flap valve
20 19 will cause the latter to remain tightly closed improving the effectiveness of the seal
23.

In order to release the pressure of liquid above the flap valve 19 and allow the flap valve to return to an open condition, the flap valve may be manually pivoted by

the spring loaded plunger 25. Additionally or alternatively the pressure can be released by opening the pressure release valve.

The embodiment described above is given by way of example only and various
5 modifications will be apparent to persons skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. For example, the hook could be replaced by any other appropriate attachment device. The float could be provided as an integral part of the flap valve. In this case, there may be no need for the side discharge opening and liquid could be discharged through the open lower end
10 of the tubular body. The flow control device could be used for applications other than those mentioned. For example it could be used in toilet cisterns and cold water tanks or it could form an integral part of a tap for filling, *inter alia*, basins or baths.

15

20

CLAIMS

1. A flow control device for dispensing liquid to a predetermined level in a container, comprising a tubular body having a closed upper end and an open lower
5 end, an inlet attached to or for attachment to a liquid supply, a flap valve which is pivoted within the body below the inlet about an axis extending transversely to the body and which, in the absence of external forces, will adopt an open condition allowing liquid to flow through the body, and a float for pivoting the flap valve towards a closed condition as the liquid level in the container rises.
- 10 2. A flow control device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inlet is arranged to direct liquid fed into the body towards one side of the pivot axis of the flap valve.
3. A flow control device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the float is on or acts on
15 the under surface of the other side of the flap valve.
4. A flow control device as claimed in claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the tubular body has a side discharge opening for the liquid below said one side of the flap valve.
- 20 5. A flow control device as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein the internal wall of the tubular body is provided with guide means for encouraging liquid dispensed from the inlet to flow past said one side of the flap valve.

6. A flow control device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the flap valve is provided with an annular seal for sealing against the internal wall of the body when the flap valve is in a closed condition.

5 7. A flow control device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the flap valve is weighted in order that it will adopt an open condition, in the absence of external forces.

8. A flow control device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein
10 the axis of the flap valve is offset to one side of a plane bisecting the flap valve so as to divide the flap valve into two portions of unequal surface area.

9. A flow control device as claimed in claim 8, wherein the float is provided on or acts on the under surface of the smaller portion of the flap valve.

15

10. A flow control device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further comprising connecting means for connecting the device to the container.

11. A flow control device as claimed in claim 10, wherein the connecting means
20 comprises a hook for hooking over a rim of the container.

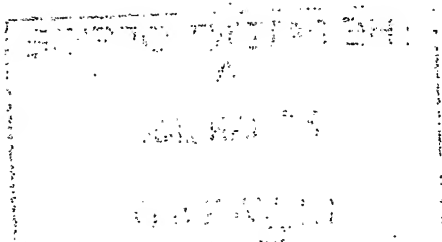
12. A flow control device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the flap valve has an externally operable member for pivoting the flap valve between closed and open conditions.

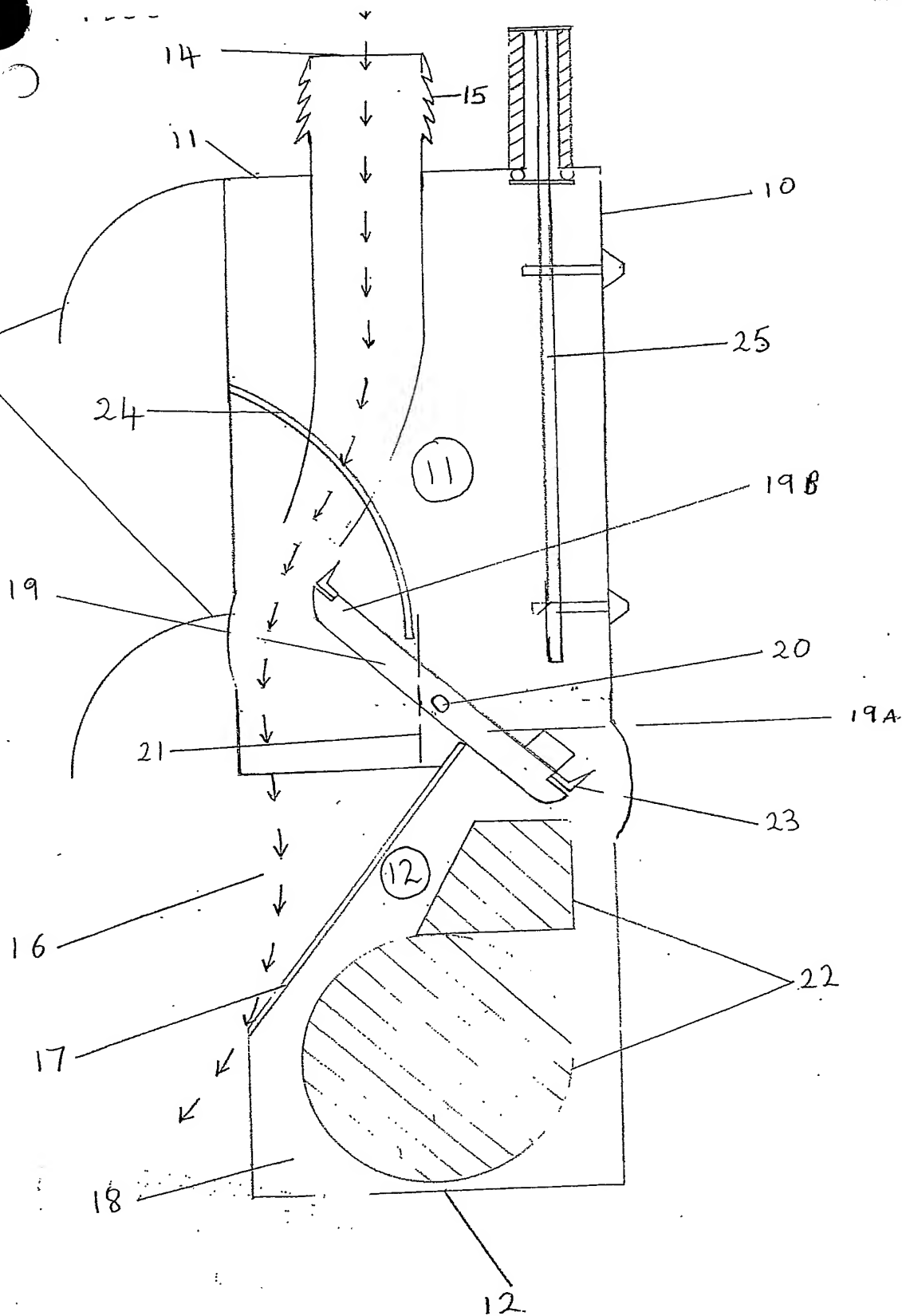
13. A flow control device as claimed in claim 12, wherein the externally operable member also acts as a stop to ensure the flap valve closes in the correct position.
14. A flow control device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein
5 the hollow body has a pressure release valve located above the flap valve when the latter is in the closed condition.
15. A flow control device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the body is outwardly contoured in regions past which the flap valve, in use, passes as
10 it approaches its closed condition.
16. A flow control device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

ABSTRACTFLOW CONTROL DEVICE

The flow control device is for dispensing liquid to a predetermined level in a
5 container. The device comprises a tubular body 10 having a closed upper end 11 and
an open lower end 12. The device can be connected to the container by a hook 13 or
could be an integral part of a tap. An inlet 14 is attached to or provided for
attachment to a liquid feed pipe. The device also includes a flap valve 19 which is
10 pivoted within the body below the inlet about an axis extending transversely to the
body and which, in the absence of external forces, will adopt an open condition
allowing liquid to flow through the body. A float 22 is provided for pivoting the flap
valve towards the closed condition as the liquid level in the container rises.

(Refer to single Figure)





Phil Jones

PCT/GBOS/000213